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Claim AmendmentsClaim 1. (cancelled)Claim 2. (cancelled)Claim 3. (cancelled)Claim 4. (previously presented)

The method of claim 15 further characterized by and including the step of providing a coating of reflective material over at least some of the interior surface of the furnace.

Claim 5. (cancelled)Claim 6. (currently amended)

The method of claim 15 further including the step of providing a ceramic or other high melting point support structure to support the tool steel metal workpiece.

Claim 7. (previously presented)

The method of claim 15 further including the step of providing an air atmosphere in the furnace.

Claim 8. (previously presented)

The method of claim 15 further including the step of

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providing a non-air environment in the furnace.

Claim 9. (previously presented)

The method of claim 15 further including the step of providing a vacuum environment in the furnace.

Claim 10. (cancelled)

Claim 11. (cancelled)

Claim 12. (cancelled)

Claim 13. (cancelled)

Claim 14. (cancelled)

Claim 15. (currently amended)

In a method of heat treating bars, blocks and other metal tool steel workpieces the steps of

providing a heat treatment furnace of a size suitable to receive a tool steel workpiece to be heat treated,

providing a heat source in the interior of the furnace consisting of a source of infrared heat energy,

subjecting the tool steel workpiece to heat treatment by exposing said tool steel workpiece to infrared heat energy from the infrared heat energy source and maintaining said tool steel workpiece stationary during subjection of the workpiece

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to heat treatment from the infrared energy source.

Claim 16. (currently amended)

In a method of heat treating bar, block and other metal tool steel workpieces the steps of

providing a heat treatment furnace of a size suitable to receive a tool steel workpiece to be heat treated,

providing a source of infrared heat energy in the interior of the furnace consisting of tungsten halogen lamp means,

subjecting the tool steel workpiece to heat treatment by exposing said tool steel workpiece to infrared heat energy from the tungsten halogen lamp means and

maintaining said tool steel workpiece stationary during subjection of the workpiece to heat treatment from the infrared energy source.

Claim 17. (cancelled)

Claim 18. (cancelled)

Claim 19. (currently amended)

In a method of heat treating a metal tool steel workpiece the steps of providing a heat source in the interior of a furnace of a size suitable to receive a tool steel workpiece to be heat treated,

providing a coating of reflective material selected from the group consisting of gold,

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silver and aluminum over at least some of the interior surface of the furnace, and  
subjecting the tool steel workpiece to heat treatment by exposing said tool steel  
workpiece to infrared heat energy from an infrared heat energy source.